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~~Top Secret~~**USSR: Romanov's Defense Role**

Evidence has accumulated since June, when Grigoriy Romanov was brought into the Secretariat, that he is the Communist Party's overseer for the Soviet defense industry. []

Romanov was the senior leader to see off Defense Minister Ustinov and greet him on his return from the Warsaw Pact Defense Ministers' meeting in October, according to Soviet media. Last summer two Soviet officials suggested that Romanov had assumed responsibility for defense industry. []

A regional party boss implied in August that Romanov also was playing a key role in the machine-building sector. As possible evidence for this, a former associate of Romanov's recently was promoted to first deputy chief of the Central Committee's Machine-Building Department. []

Comment: The addition of Romanov to the Secretariat helped fill a gap that resulted from the retirement of Secretary Kirilenko last year and Ustinov's appointment as defense minister several years earlier. Romanov's background equips him to include oversight of defense industry among his duties. He began his career as a ship designer in Leningrad and rose to party boss of that region, which has a heavy concentration of defense plants. []

Romanov, as secretary for defense industry, would also play an important role in the machine-building sector. Such supervision has traditionally been shared by the secretaries responsible for defense and heavy industry. The promotion of his former associate suggests that Romanov is active behind the scenes. []

A prominent Soviet academic claimed last summer that Ustinov, now 75, would retire next year. The leadership may be putting Romanov in position to assume the major burden for defense industry after the departure of Ustinov, who apparently has supervised that sector in the absence of a responsible senior secretary. []

Romanov's appointment to the Secretariat is likely to result in more intensive party oversight of the military procurement process. He probably will be receptive to the military's needs, however, and he will defer to Ustinov's judgment. []

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